DR. STRANGE
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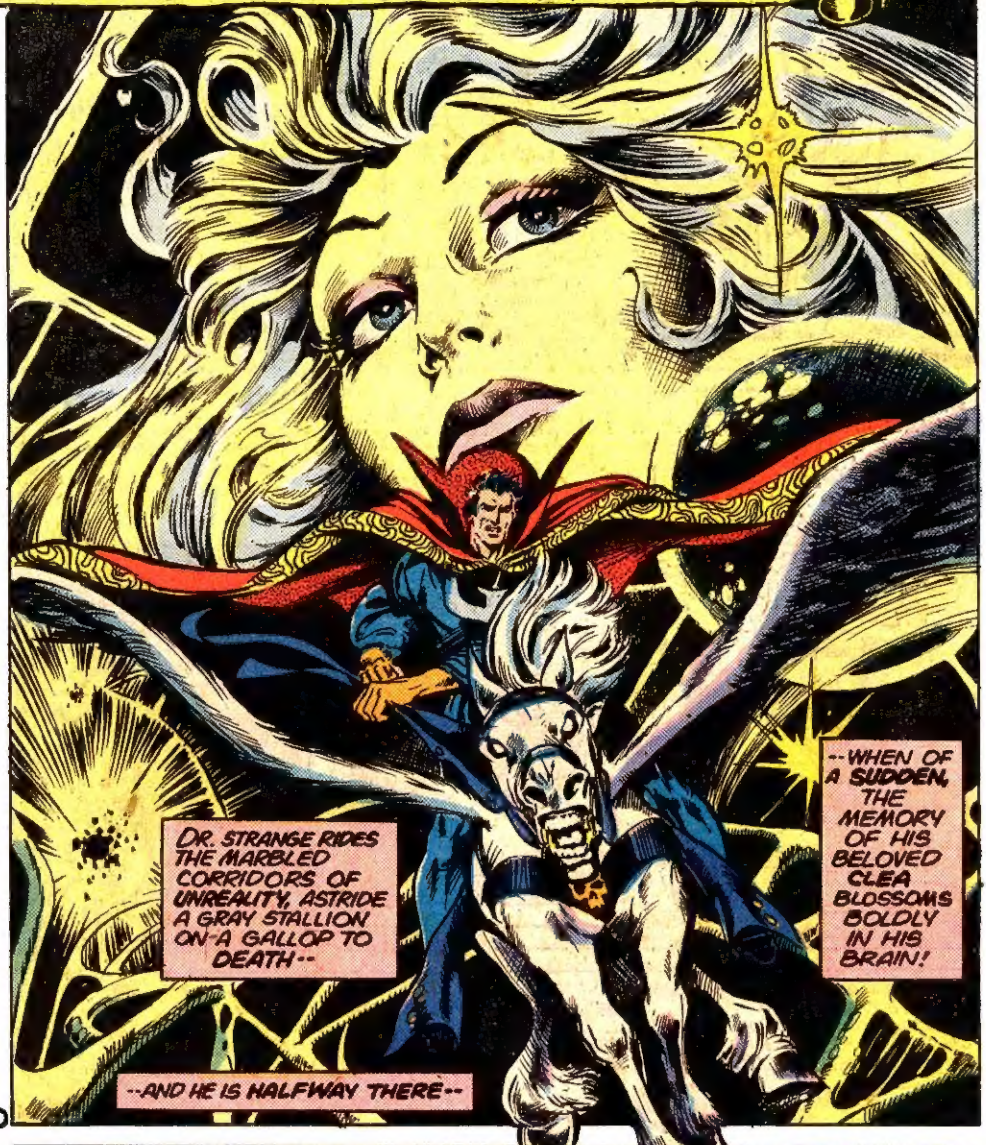
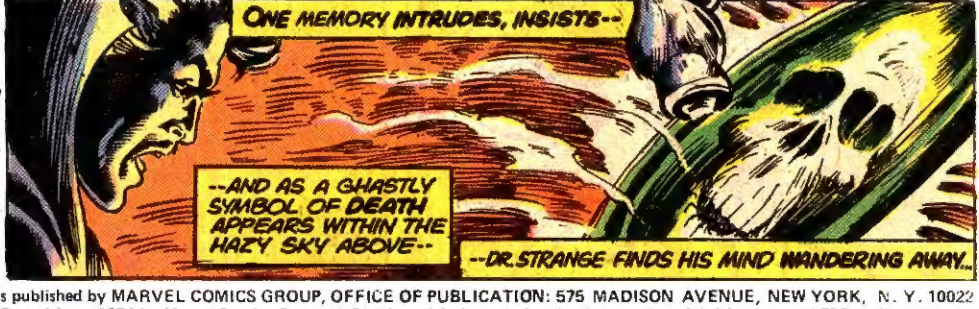
DOCTOR
STRANGE
MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS
HE'S BACK-- BACK FROM THE DEAD!
THE DREAD DORMAMMU!

Stan Lee presents: Dr. STRANGE MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS!™

Once he was a man like most *others* — a *worldly* man, seduced and jaded by *material* things. But then he discovered the *separate* reality, where *sorcery* and *men's souls* shaped the forces that shape our *lives*. In that instant, he was *born again*, to become a man like *no* other — a man who left us *behind*, as he strove to stand against the unseen subtle perils hovering *thick* and *black* around our fragile existence...and so began the mystic majesty of...*DR. STRANGE!*

AMIDST THE MADNESS


DR. STRANGE RIDES THE MARBLED CORRIDORS OF UNREALITY, ASTRIDE A GRAY STALLION ON A GALLOP TO DEATH--
--WHEN OF A SUDDEN, THE MEMORY OF HIS BELOVED CLEA BLOSSOMS BOLDLY IN HIS BRAIN!
--AND HE IS HALFWAY THERE--


ONE MEMORY INTRUDES, INSISTS--
--AND AS A GHASTLY SYMBOL OF DEATH APPEARS WITHIN THE HAZY SKY ABOVE--
--DR. STRANGE FINDS HIS MIND WANDERING AWAY...

Featuring:
STAN LEE
and
STEVE DITKO
at their
GREATEST!

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FRANK BRUNNER
and ALAN WEISS
·New Art·
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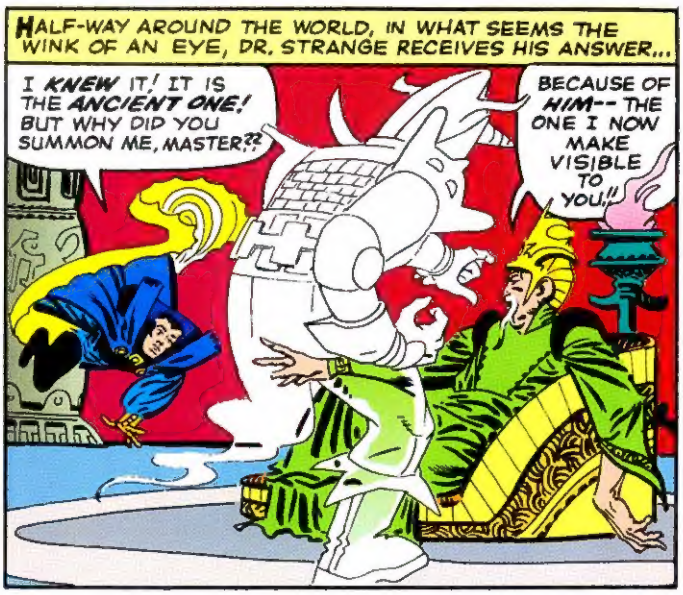
IT IS MIDNIGHT! THE CITY IS STILL! THE SILENCE IS THICK! THE SKY IS DARK AND STARLESS, AS THE ECTOPLASMIC FORM OF DR. STRANGE DRIFTS THRU HIS WINDOW TO REUNITE WITH HIS PHYSICAL FORM!
IT IS GOOD TO BE HOME AGAIN, NOW THAT I KNOW THE EVIL BARON MORDO HAS BEEN DEFEATED ONCE MORE!*
*SEE STRANGE TALES #125--EDITOR.

BUT NO SOONER DOES THE MAN OF MYSTERY ATTAIN HIS MORTAL BODY, THAN HE FINDS HIMSELF IN THE GRIP OF A SPELL SO POWERFUL HE DARES NOT EVEN THINK ITS NAME!
ONLY ONE LIVING BEING HAS THE POWER TO DO THIS!! BUT-- WHY??

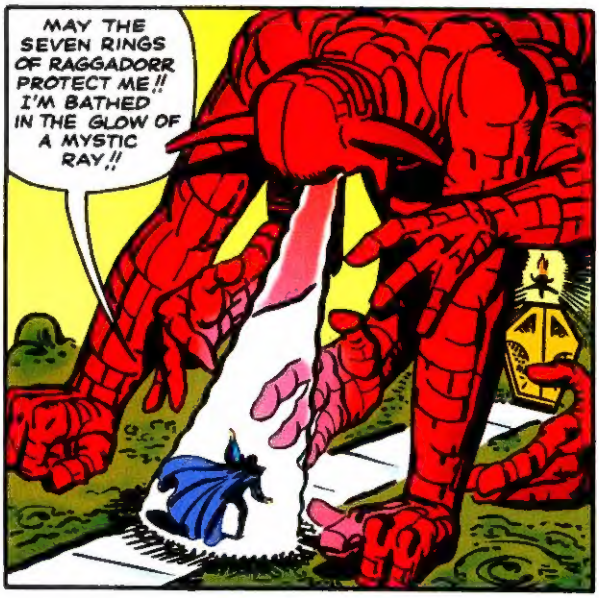

HALF-WAY AROUND THE WORLD, IN WHAT SEEMS THE WINK OF AN EYE, DR. STRANGE RECEIVES HIS ANSWER...
I KNEW IT! IT IS THE ANCIENT ONE! BUT WHY DID YOU SUMMON ME, MASTER??
BECAUSE OF HIM-- THE ONE I NOW MAKE VISIBLE TO YOU!!

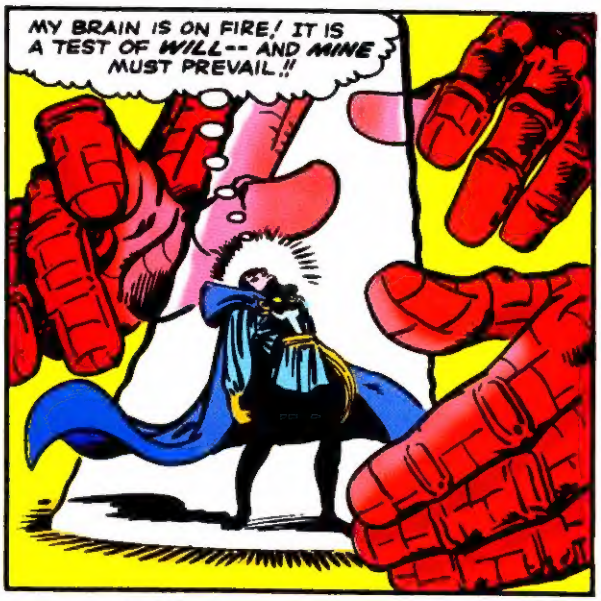
A SPIRIT FORM! DOES HE DARE TO MENACE YOU, MASTER??
NO, MY SON! HE IS MERELY A MESSENGER --FROM THE DREAD DORMAMMU!!

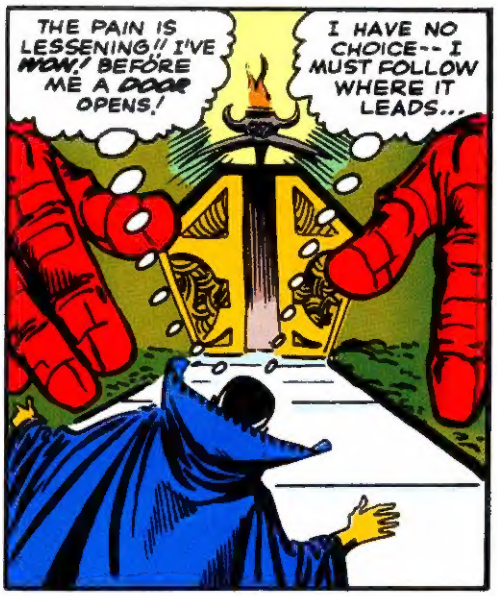
THE DREAD DORMAMMU!! MOST POWERFUL OF THE DWELLERS IN THE REALM OF DARKNESS!! WHAT DOES HE SEEK OF US?
HE THREATENS TO LEAVE THE DARK REALM--TO ENTER THE WORLD OF MAN! BUT THAT MUST NEVER BE!

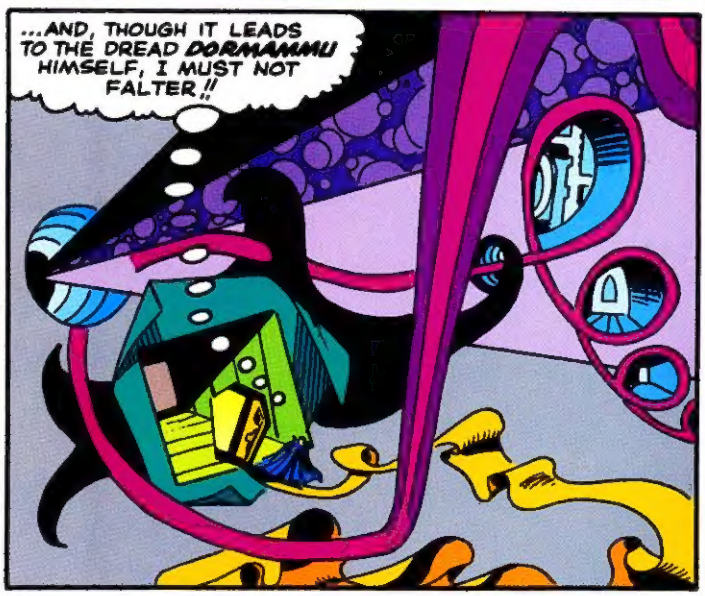
HIS POWERS ARE TOO GREAT! HIS WAYS ARE TOO ALIEN! HUMANITY MUST NEVER BE THREATENED BY SUCH A MENACE! AND YET--I AM TOO AGED--TOO WEARY-- TO STOP HIM!
SAY NO MORE, MASTER! I SHALL CONFRONT THE DREAD DORMAMMU!
2

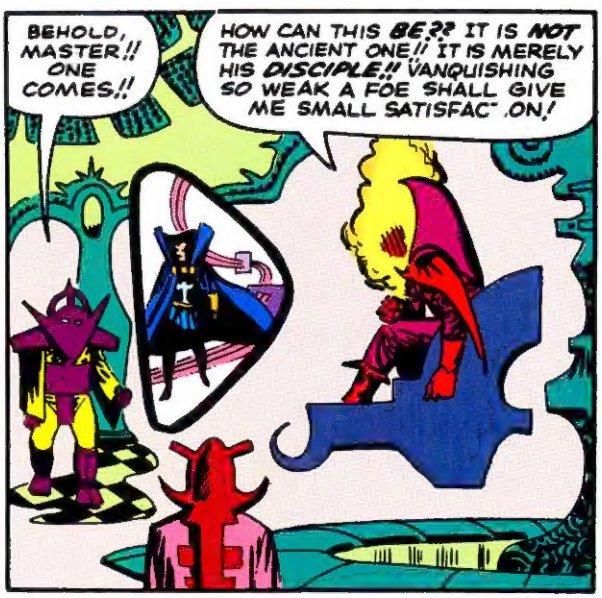
REMEMBER THIS, MY SON--HE IS LIKE NO FOE YOU HAVE EVER FOUGHT BEFORE! HIS POWER IS BEYOND DESCRIPTION--HIS WORLD IS FRAUGHT WITH STRANGE DANGERS--
IT IS TRULY SAID --IN ALL THE UNIVERSE, THERE IS NONE SO TO COMPARE TO THE DREAD DORMAMMU!
EVEN I, AT THE HEIGHT OF MY POWER, WAS UNABLE TO DEFEAT HIM! IF YOU SHOULD FAIL--THERE CAN BE NO HELP FOR YOU!!
I DARE NOT FAIL, MASTER!! TOO MUCH IS AT STAKE!!
SO BE IT, THEN!! BY THE SHADES OF THE SERAPHIM--IN THE NAME OF THE ALL-SEEING AGAMOTTO--
--I DISPATCH THEE TO--THE DOMAIN OF THE DREAD DORMAMMU!!!
IT IS DONE!! THERE CAN BE NO TURNING BACK!! I AM COMMITTED TO THE BATTLE OF MY LIFE!!
SLOWLY THE MISTS BEGIN TO CLEAR, AS A STRANGE, STARTLING WORLD TAKES FORM! A WORLD IN WHICH THE IMPOSSIBLE IS BELIEVABLE, AND THE INCREDIBLE IS COMMONPLACE--THE WORLD OF THE DARK DOMAIN--THE WORLD OF THE DREAD DORMAMMU!
THE JOURNEY IS OVER! BUT JUDGING BY THE UNSPEAKABLE MENACE I SEE BEFORE ME, THE BATTLE IS JUST BEGUN!
3

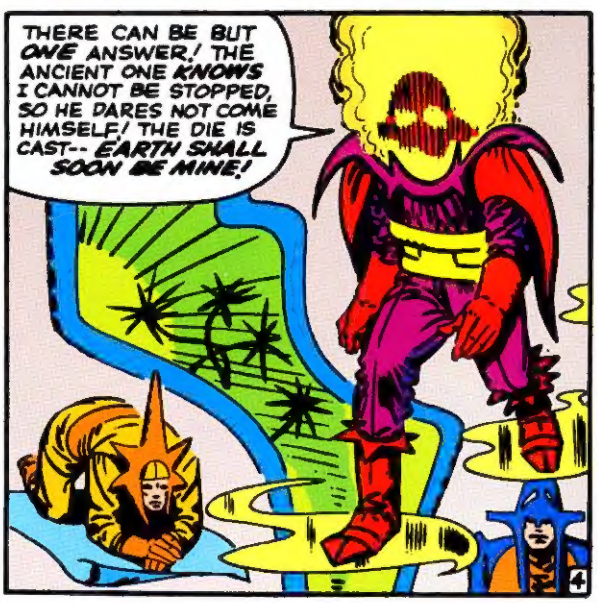

MAY THE SEVEN RINGS OF RAGGADORR PROTECT ME!! I'M BATHED IN THE GLOW OF A MYSTIC RAY!!

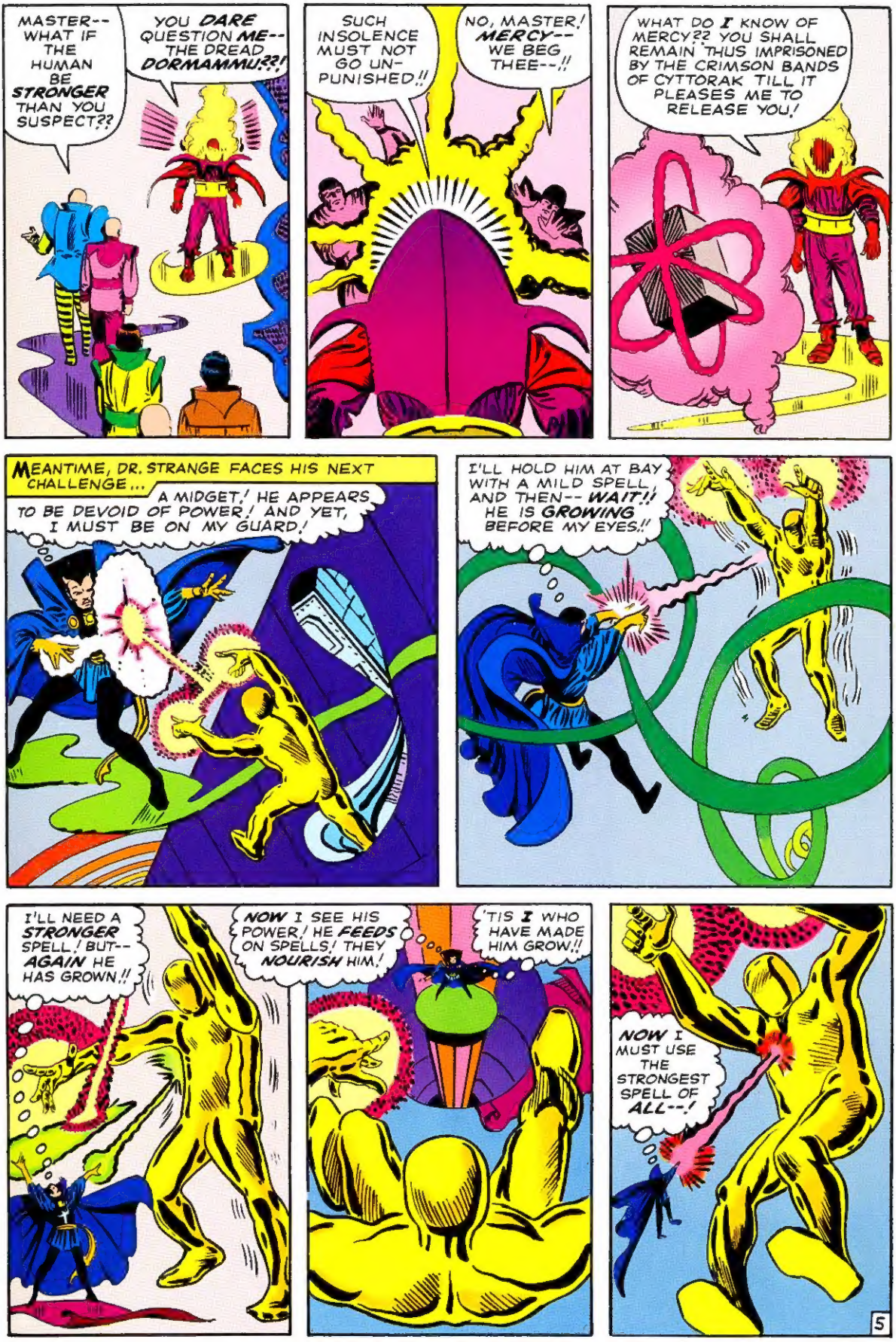

MY BRAIN IS ON FIRE! IT IS A TEST OF WILL-- AND MINE MUST PREVAIL!!

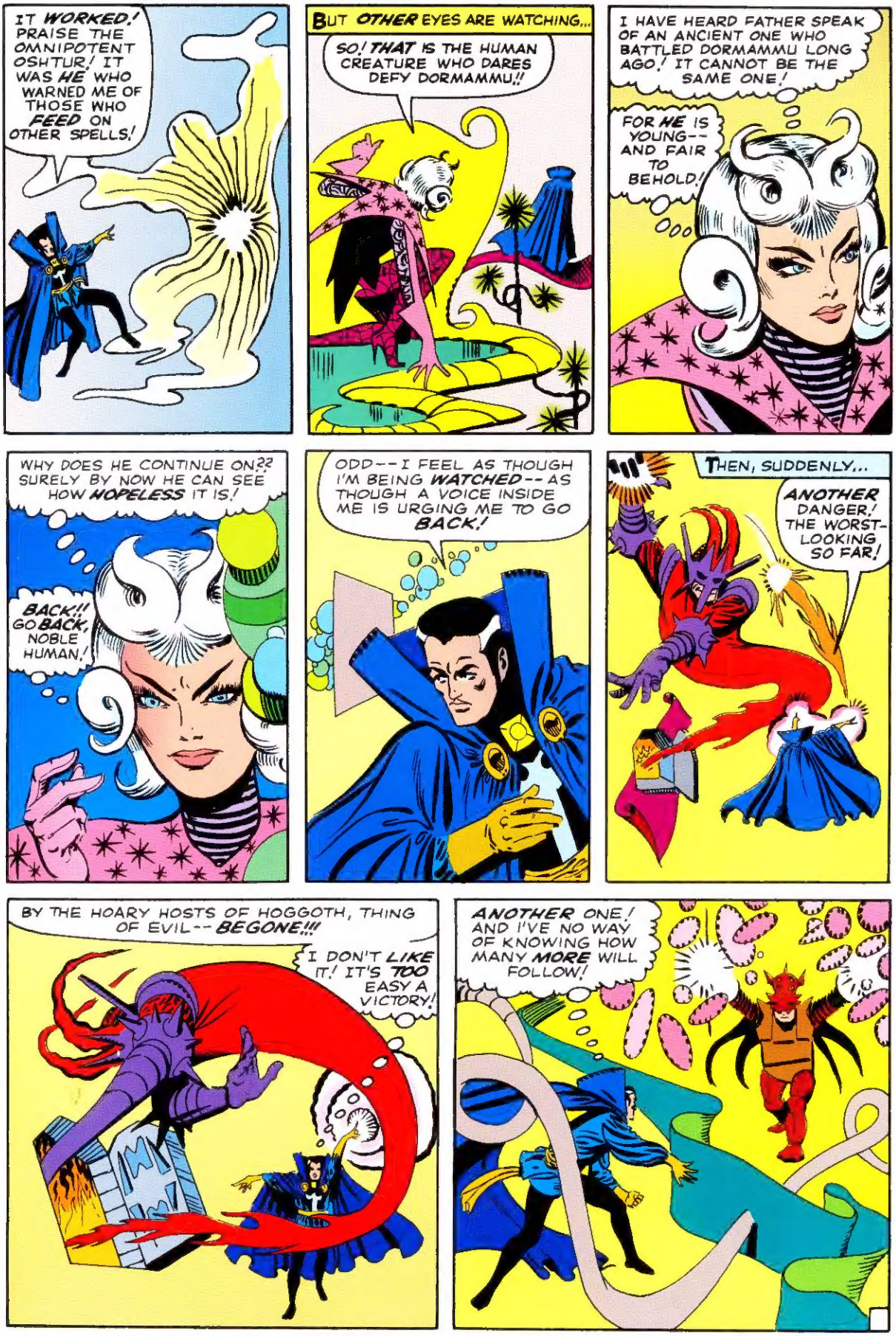

THE PAIN IS LESSENING!! I'VE WON! BEFORE ME A DOOR OPENS!
I HAVE NO CHOICE-- I MUST FOLLOW WHERE IT LEADS...

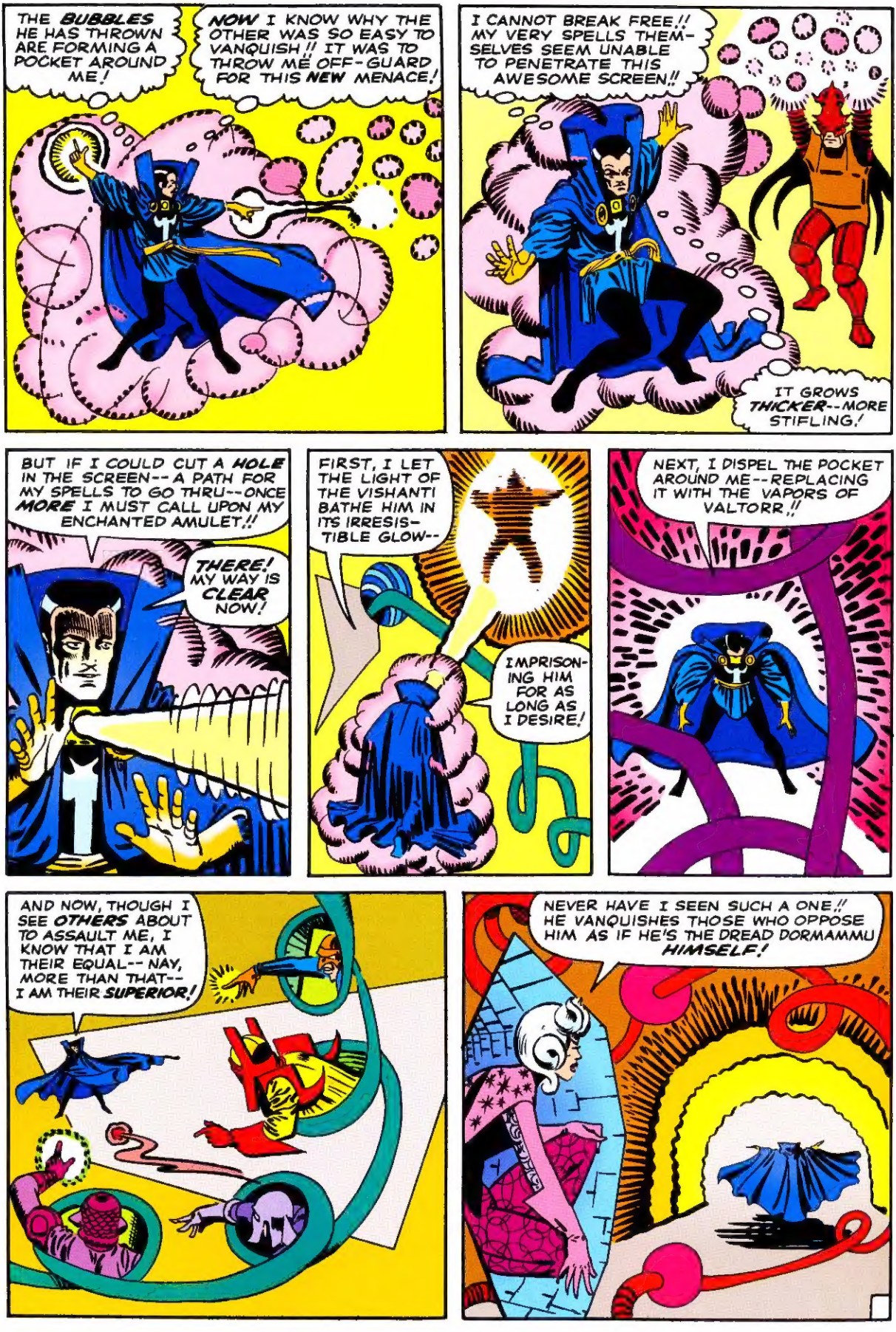

...AND, THOUGH IT LEADS TO THE DREAD DORMAMMU HIMSELF, I MUST NOT FALTER!!

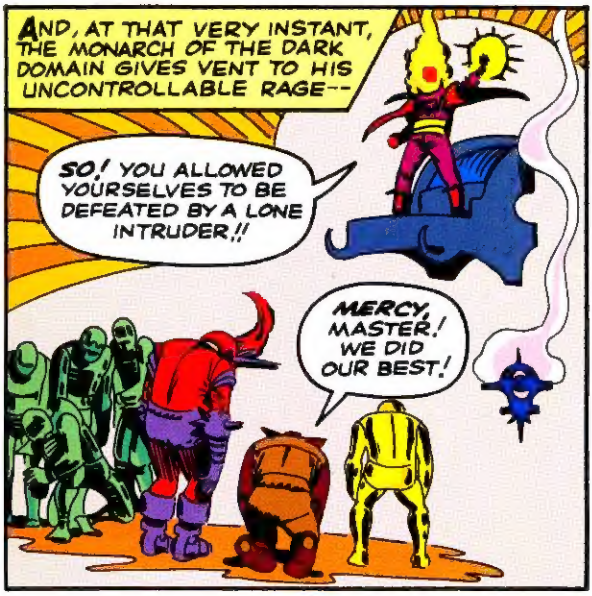

BEHOLD, MASTER!! ONE COMES!!
HOW CAN THIS BE?? IT IS NOT THE ANCIENT ONE!! IT IS MERELY HIS DISCIPLE!! VANQUISHING SO WEAK A FOE SHALL GIVE ME SMALL SATISFAC-.ON!

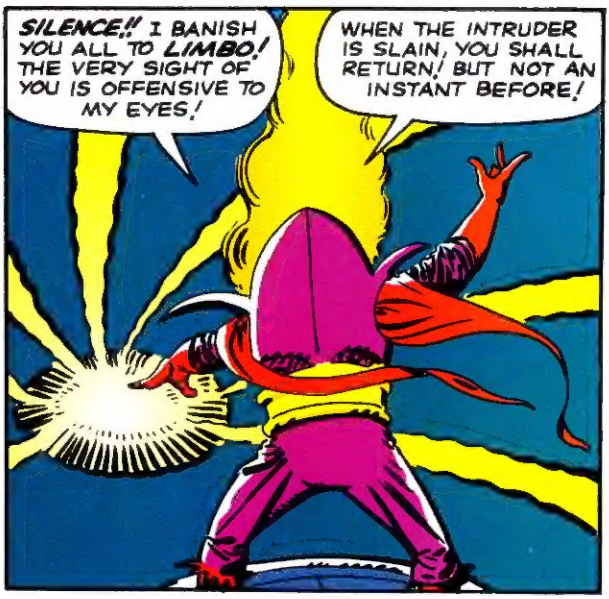

THERE CAN BE BUT ONE ANSWER! THE ANCIENT ONE KNOWS I CANNOT BE STOPPED, SO HE DARES NOT COME HIMSELF! THE DIE IS CAST-- EARTH SHALL SOON BE MINE!
4

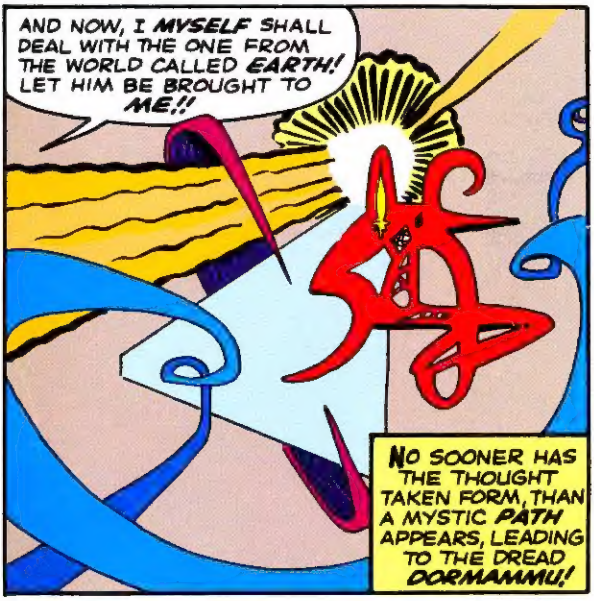

MASTER-- WHAT IF THE HUMAN BE STRONGER THAN YOU SUSPECT??
YOU DARE QUESTION ME-- THE DREAD DORMAMMU??!
SUCH INSOLENCE MUST NOT GO UN-PUNISHED!!
NO, MASTER! MERCY-- WE BEG THEE--!!
WHAT DO I KNOW OF MERCY?? YOU SHALL REMAIN THUS IMPRISONED BY THE CRIMSON BANDS OF CYTTORAK TILL IT PLEASES ME TO RELEASE YOU!
MEANTIME, DR. STRANGE FACES HIS NEXT CHALLENGE...
A MIDGET,! HE APPEARS TO BE DEVOID OF POWER! AND YET, I MUST BE ON MY GUARD!
I'LL HOLD HIM AT BAY WITH A MILD SPELL, AND THEN-- WAIT!! HE IS GROWING BEFORE MY EYES!!
I'LL NEED A STRONGER SPELL! BUT-- AGAIN HE HAS GROWN!!
NOW I SEE HIS POWER,! HE FEEDS ON SPELLS! THEY NOURISH HIM!
'TIS I WHO HAVE MADE HIM GROW!!
NOW I MUST USE THE STRONGEST SPELL OF ALL--!
5


IT WORKED! PRAISE THE OMNIPOTENT OSHTUR! IT WAS HE WHO WARNED ME OF THOSE WHO FEED ON OTHER SPELLS!
BUT OTHER EYES ARE WATCHING...
SO! THAT IS THE HUMAN CREATURE WHO DARES DEFY DORMAMMU!!
I HAVE HEARD FATHER SPEAK OF AN ANCIENT ONE WHO BATTLED DORMAMMU LONG AGO! IT CANNOT BE THE SAME ONE!
FOR HE IS YOUNG-- AND FAIR TO BEHOLD!
Ooo
WHY DOES HE CONTINUE ON?? SURELY BY NOW HE CAN SEE HOW HOPELESS IT IS!
BACK!! GO BACK, NOBLE HUMAN!
ODD--I FEEL AS THOUGH I'M BEING WATCHED--AS THOUGH A VOICE INSIDE ME IS URGING ME TO GO BACK!
THEN, SUDDENLY...
ANOTHER DANGER! THE WORST-LOOKING SO FAR!
BY THE HOARY HOSTS OF HOGGOTH, THING OF EVIL--BEGONE!!!
I DON'T LIKE IT! IT'S TOO EASY A VICTORY!
ANOTHER ONE! AND I'VE NO WAY OF KNOWING HOW MANY MORE WILL FOLLOW!


THE BUBBLES HE HAS THROWN ARE FORMING A POCKET AROUND ME!
NOW I KNOW WHY THE OTHER WAS SO EASY TO VANQUISH!! IT WAS TO THROW ME OFF-GUARD FOR THIS NEW MENACE!
I CANNOT BREAK FREE!! MY VERY SPELLS THEMSELVES SEEM UNABLE TO PENETRATE THIS AWESOME SCREEN!!
IT GROWS THICKER--MORE STIFLING!
BUT IF I COULD CUT A HOLE IN THE SCREEN--A PATH FOR MY SPELLS TO GO THRU--ONCE MORE I MUST CALL UPON MY ENCHANTED AMULET!!
THERE! MY WAY IS CLEAR NOW!
FIRST, I LET THE LIGHT OF THE VISHANTI BATHE HIM IN ITS IRRESISTIBLE GLOW--
IMPRISONING HIM FOR AS LONG AS I DESIRE!
NEXT, I DISPEL THE POCKET AROUND ME--REPLACING IT WITH THE VAPORS OF VALTORR!!
AND NOW, THOUGH I SEE OTHERS ABOUT TO ASSAULT ME, I KNOW THAT I AM THEIR EQUAL--NAY, MORE THAN THAT--I AM THEIR SUPERIOR!
NEVER HAVE I SEEN SUCH A ONE!! HE VANQUISHES THOSE WHO OPPOSE HIM AS IF HE'S THE DREAD DORMAMMU HIMSELF!


AND, AT THAT VERY INSTANT, THE MONARCH OF THE DARK DOMAIN GIVES VENT TO HIS UNCONTROLLABLE RAGE--
SO! YOU ALLOWED YOURSELVES TO BE DEFEATED BY A LONE INTRUDER!!
MERCY, MASTER! WE DID OUR BEST!


SILENCE!! I BANISH YOU ALL TO LIMBO! THE VERY SIGHT OF YOU IS OFFENSIVE TO MY EYES!
WHEN THE INTRUDER IS SLAIN, YOU SHALL RETURN! BUT NOT AN INSTANT BEFORE!


AND NOW, I MYSELF SHALL DEAL WITH THE ONE FROM THE WORLD CALLED EARTH! LET HIM BE BROUGHT TO ME!!
NO SOONER HAS THE THOUGHT TAKEN FORM, THAN A MYSTIC PATH APPEARS, LEADING TO THE DREAD DORMAMMU!

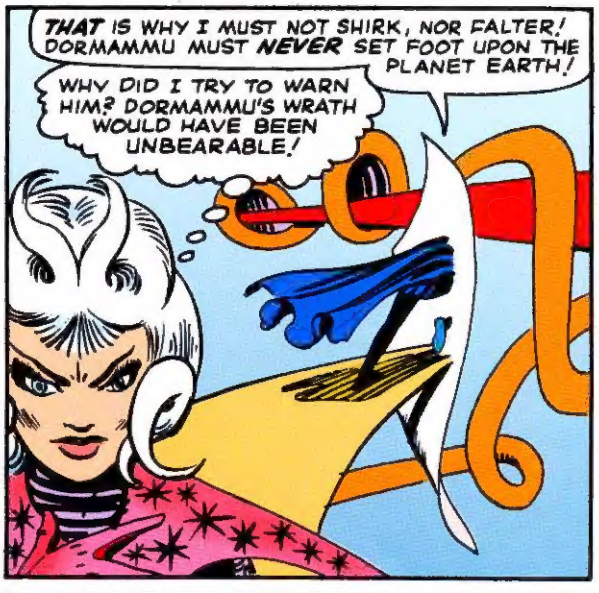
NEVER HAVE I SENSED SUCH RAGE, SUCH FURY IN THE HEART OF DORMAMMU! THE VALIANT STRANGER WALKS TO HIS DOOM!!

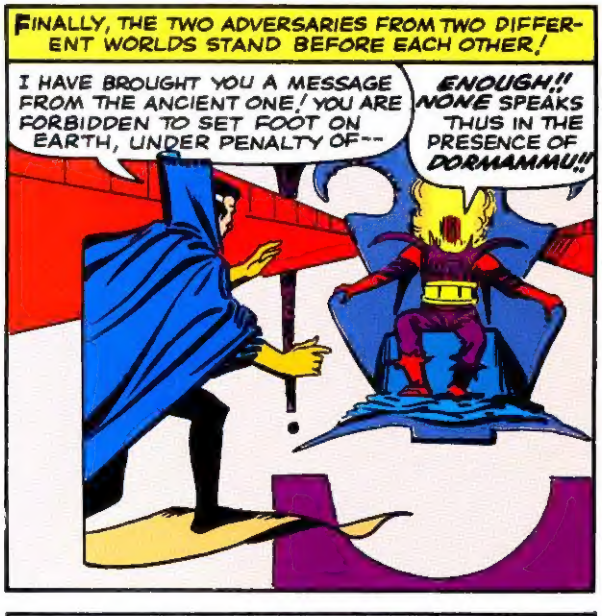
COME FORWARD, YOU OF THE OUTER WORLD!! I WISH TO LOOK UPON YOUR FEATURES--BEFORE YOU DIE!

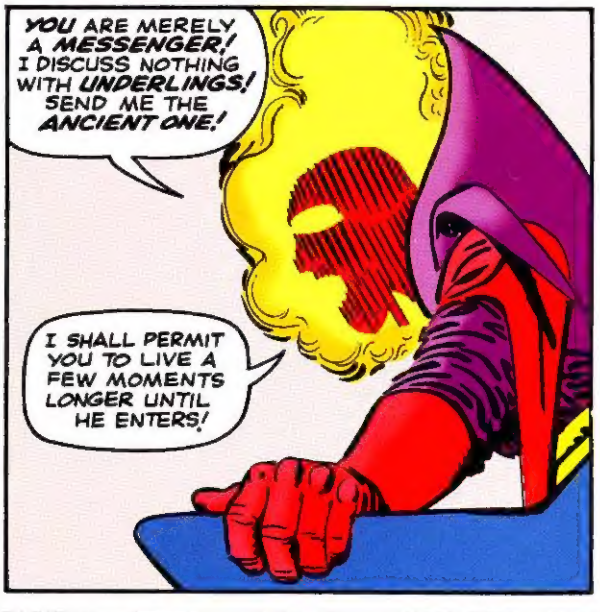
I SENSE SOMEONE BEHIND ME! I WAS RIGHT! IT'S--A GIRL!
STOP! YOU MUST GO NO FURTHER! THE DREAD DORMAMMU WAITS TO SLAY YOU!

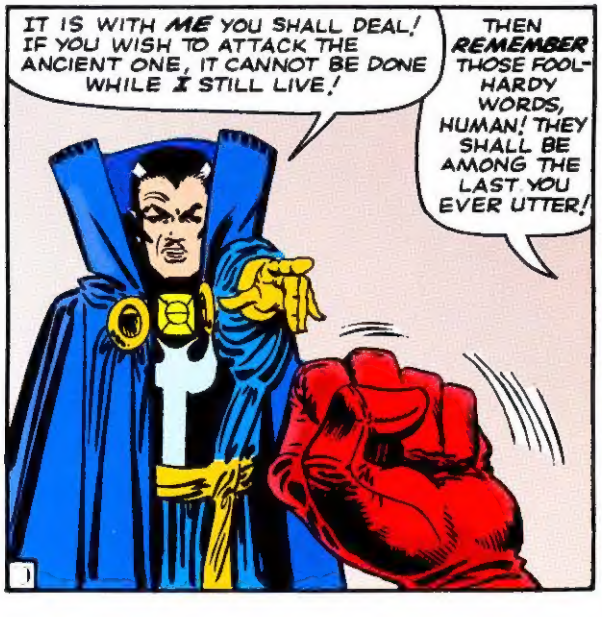
I AM AWARE OF THAT!
BUT YOU CANNOT SUSPECT HOW POWERFUL HE IS! YOU THROW AWAY YOUR LIFE BY FACING HIM!

I HAVE PLEDGED MY LIFE TO BATTLING EVIL! THERE CAN BE NO GREATER CALLING!
BUT YOU CANNOT KNOW WHAT YOU WILL FACE! IN ALL THE UNIVERSE, THERE IS NONE LIKE... DORMAMMU!

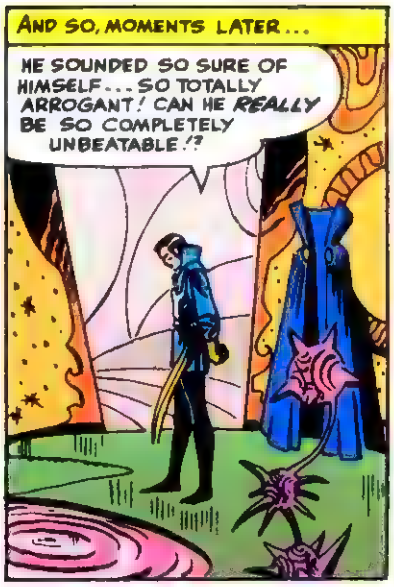

THAT IS WHY I MUST NOT SHIRK, NOR FALTER! DORMAMMU MUST NEVER SET FOOT UPON THE PLANET EARTH!
WHY DID I TRY TO WARN HIM? DORMAMMU'S WRATH WOULD HAVE BEEN UNBEARABLE!

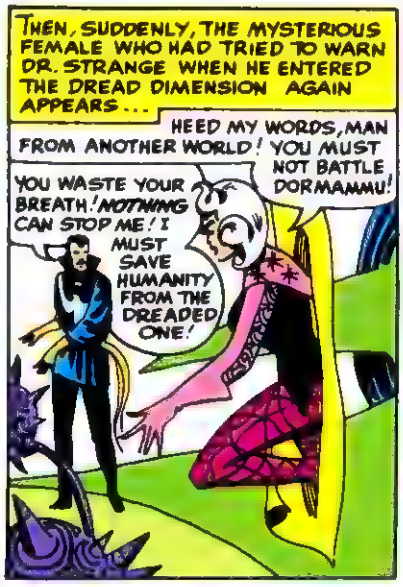

FINALLY, THE TWO ADVERSARIES FROM TWO DIFFERENT WORLDS STAND BEFORE EACH OTHER!
I HAVE BROUGHT YOU A MESSAGE FROM THE ANCIENT ONE! YOU ARE FORBIDDEN TO SET FOOT ON EARTH, UNDER PENALTY OF--
ENOUGH!! NONE SPEAKS THUS IN THE PRESENCE OF DORMAMMU!!


YOU ARE MERELY A MESSENGER! I DISCUSS NOTHING WITH UNDERLINGS! SEND ME THE ANCIENT ONE!
I SHALL PERMIT YOU TO LIVE A FEW MOMENTS LONGER UNTIL HE ENTERS!


IT IS WITH ME YOU SHALL DEAL! IF YOU WISH TO ATTACK THE ANCIENT ONE, IT CANNOT BE DONE WHILE I STILL LIVE!
THEN REMEMBER THOSE FOOLHARDY WORDS, HUMAN! THEY SHALL BE AMONG THE LAST YOU EVER UTTER!

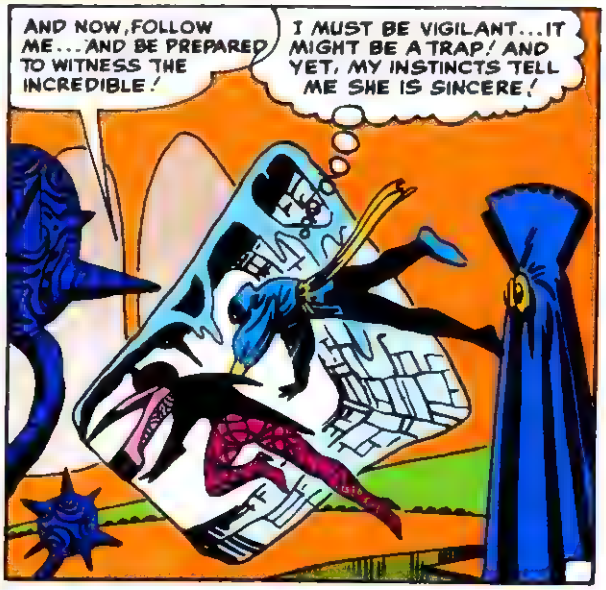
BAH! ALL THROUGH THE AGES, WITLESS CREATURES SUCH AS YOU HAVE DARED TO CHALLENGE ME... AND ALL HAVE MET THE SAME DEADLY FATE! I SHALL GIVE YOU A BRIEF PERIOD TO RECONSIDER BEFORE I SUMMON YOU TO YOUR FINAL BATTLE!
FOR I NO LONGER DERIVE PLEASURE FROM DEFEATING WEAK OPPONENTS ...THE SPORT NOW BORES ME!

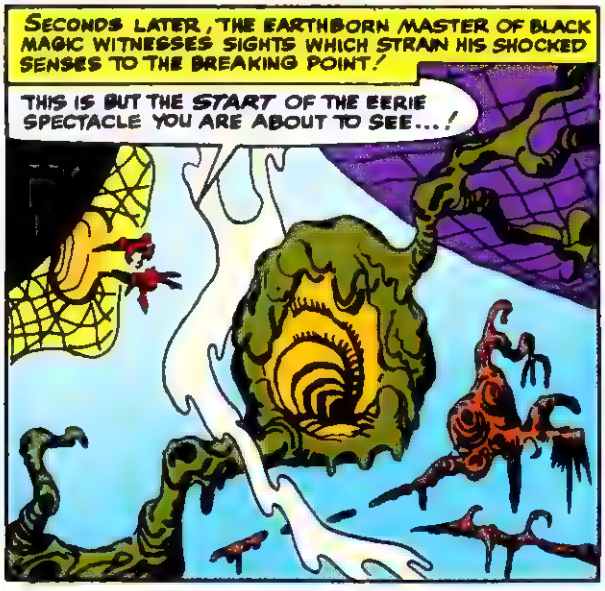

AND SO, MOMENTS LATER...
HE SOUNDED SO SURE OF HIMSELF... SO TOTALLY ARROGANT! CAN HE REALLY BE SO COMPLETELY UNBEATABLE!?


THEN, SUDDENLY, THE MYSTERIOUS FEMALE WHO HAD TRIED TO WARN DR. STRANGE WHEN HE ENTERED THE DREAD DIMENSION AGAIN APPEARS...
HEED MY WORDS, MAN FROM ANOTHER WORLD! YOU MUST NOT BATTLE DORMAMMU!
YOU WASTE YOUR BREATH! NOTHING CAN STOP ME! I MUST SAVE HUMANITY FROM THE DREADED ONE!

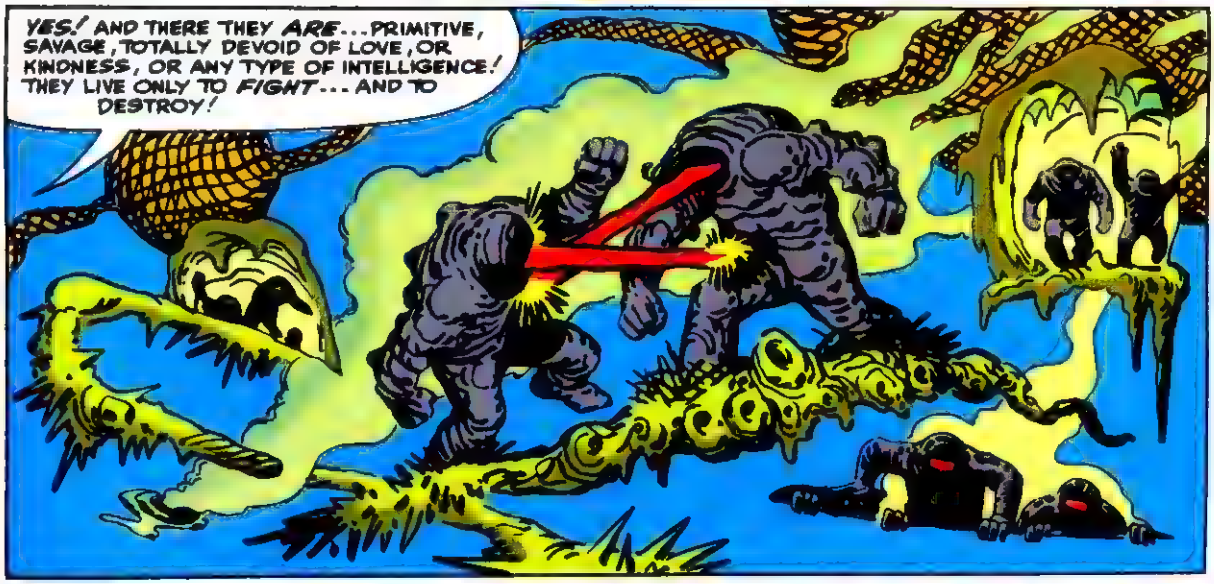
EVEN THOUGH I PERISH IN THE ATTEMPT, I DARE NOT FALTER! MY LIFE MEANS NOTHING!
NO! IT IS NOT ONLY OF YOU I AM THINKING! IF, BY SOME UNBELIEVABLE MIRACLE YOU SHOULD TRIUMPH, IT COULD MEAN THE END OF US!
I DO NOT UNDERSTAND!

THEN YOU MUST BE SHOWN! PREPARE YOURSELF, EARTH MORTAL... PREPARE FOR SIGHTS SUCH AS NO HUMAN EYES HAVE EVER BEFORE BEHELD!
LET THE ENTRANCE APPEAR... THE ENTRANCE TO... THE BEYOND!

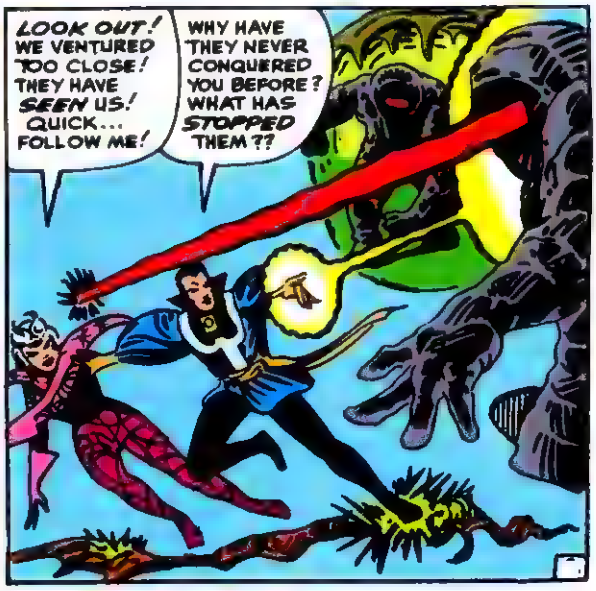

AND NOW, FOLLOW ME... AND BE PREPARED TO WITNESS THE INCREDIBLE!
I MUST BE VIGILANT... IT MIGHT BE A TRAP! AND YET, MY INSTINCTS TELL ME SHE IS SINCERE!


SECONDS LATER, THE EARTHBORN MASTER OF BLACK MAGIC WITNESSES SIGHTS WHICH STRAIN HIS SHOCKED SENSES TO THE BREAKING POINT!
THIS IS BUT THE START OF THE EERIE SPECTACLE YOU ARE ABOUT TO SEE...!

FOR THIS IS THE OUTSKIRTS OF DORMAMMU'S DOMAIN... WHERE THE MINDLESS ONES DWELL!
THE MINDLESS ONES ??!


YES! AND THERE THEY ARE... PRIMITIVE, SAVAGE, TOTALLY DEVOID OF LOVE, OR KINDNESS, OR ANY TYPE OF INTELLIGENCE! THEY LIVE ONLY TO FIGHT... AND TO DESTROY!

THEY HAVE LIVED AT THE FRINGE OF OUR DIMENSION SINCE THE BEGINNING OF TIME... EVER WAITING FOR A CHANCE TO ATTACK US... TO SLAY US ALL!

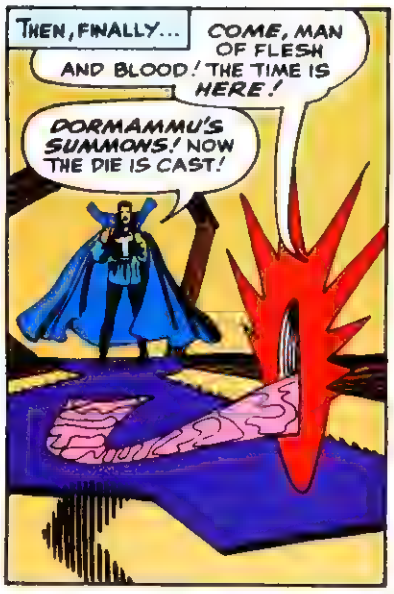

LOOK OUT! WE VENTURED TOO CLOSE! THEY HAVE SEEN US! QUICK... FOLLOW ME!
WHY HAVE THEY NEVER CONQUERED YOU BEFORE? WHAT HAS STOPPED THEM??

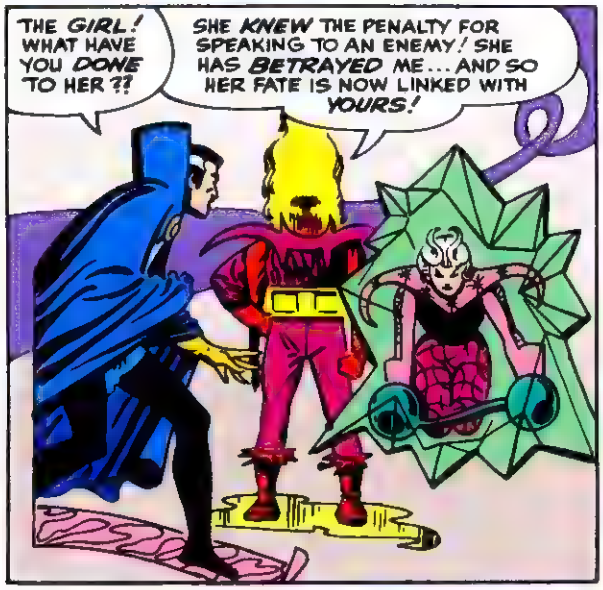
ONLY ONE THING... THIS MYSTIC SHIELD BEHIND WHICH WE BOTH HAVE RUN! IT IS TOO POWERFUL FOR THE MINDLESS ONES TO PENETRATE!
IT WAS CREATED BY DORMAMMU, AGES AGO... TO KEEP US SAFE FROM THOSE WHO WOULD DESTROY US!

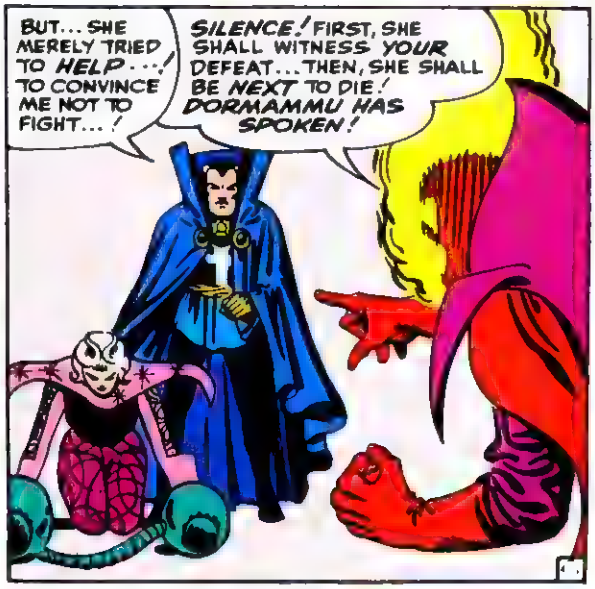
ONLY THE MIGHTY SPELLS OF THE DREADED ONE CAN KEEP THE SHIELD IN EXISTENCE! IF ANYTHING SHOULD HAPPEN TO HIM, THEN ALL OF US HERE IN HIS DIMENSION ARE DOOMED!
I KNOW THAT SHE SPEAKS THE TRUTH! IT IS NO TRICK! THOUGH HE REPRESENTS A MENACE TO MANKIND, DORMAMMU IS A PROTECTOR TO HIS OWN PEOPLE!

THAT IS WHY YOU MUST NOT DEFEAT HIM! ONLY HE CAN SAVE US FROM THE MINDLESS ONES!
YET, IF HE LIVES, HUMANITY SHALL ALWAYS BE IN DANGER!

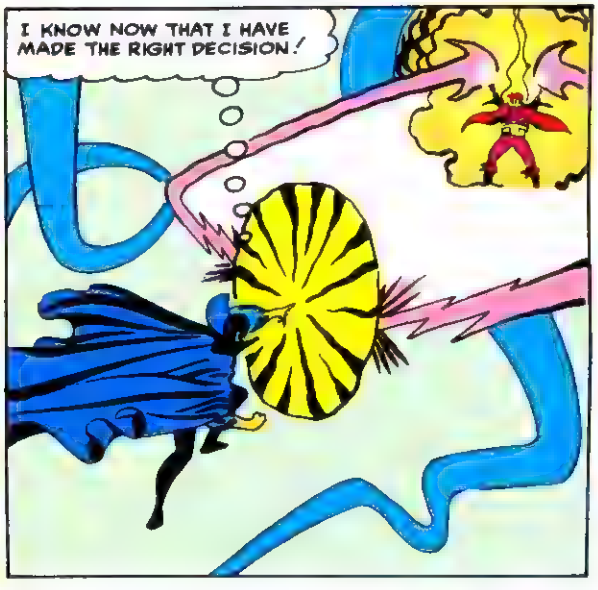
I WISH TO BRING NO HARM TO THIS FANTASTIC WORLD... AND YET MY FIRST DUTY IS TO EARTH... AND THE ONES WHO INHABIT IT!
I HAVE NO CHOICE... I MUST BE TRUE TO MY OATH!

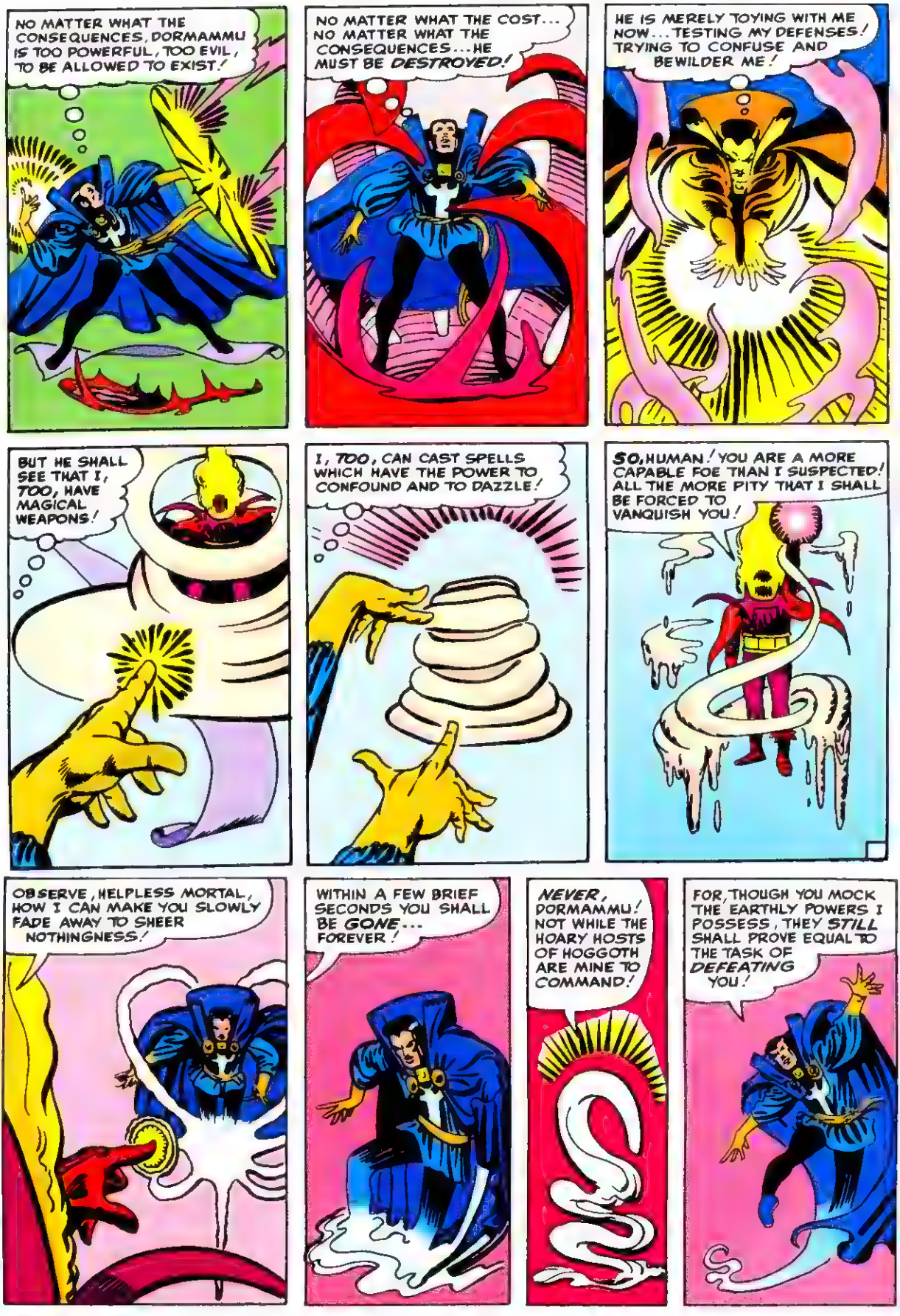

THEN, FINALLY...
COME, MAN OF FLESH AND BLOOD! THE TIME IS HERE!
DORMAMMU'S SUMMONS! NOW THE DIE IS CAST!


THE GIRL! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HER??
SHE KNEW THE PENALTY FOR SPEAKING TO AN ENEMY! SHE HAS BETRAYED ME... AND SO HER FATE IS NOW LINKED WITH YOURS!

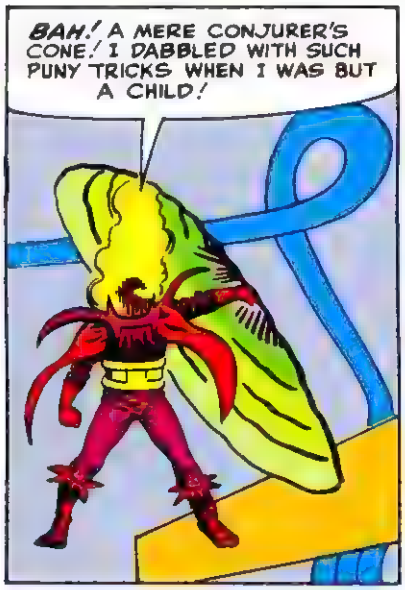

BUT... SHE MERELY TRIED TO HELP.../ TO CONVINCE ME NOT TO FIGHT... /
SILENCE! FIRST, SHE SHALL WITNESS YOUR DEFEAT... THEN, SHE SHALL BE NEXT TO DIE! DORMAMMU HAS SPOKEN!

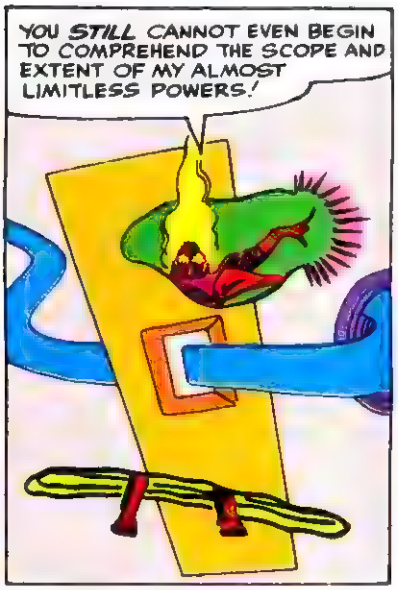
NOW LET THE BATTLE BEGIN! THE BATTLE WHICH SHALL END AS ALL THOSE IN THE PAST... WITH THE COMPLETE VICTORY OF DORMAMMU, MASTER OF THE DARK DOMAIN!


I KNOW NOW THAT I HAVE MADE THE RIGHT DECISION!

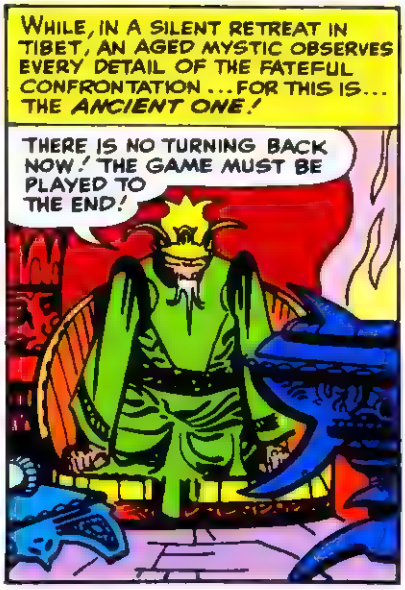

NO MATTER WHAT THE CONSEQUENCES, DORMAMMU IS TOO POWERFUL, TOO EVIL, TO BE ALLOWED TO EXIST!
NO MATTER WHAT THE COST... NO MATTER WHAT THE CONSEQUENCES... HE MUST BE DESTROYED!
HE IS MERELY TOYING WITH ME NOW... TESTING MY DEFENSES! TRYING TO CONFUSE AND BEWILDER ME!
BUT HE SHALL SEE THAT I, TOO, HAVE MAGICAL WEAPONS!
I, TOO, CAN CAST SPELLS WHICH HAVE THE POWER TO CONFOUND AND TO DAZZLE!
SO, HUMAN! YOU ARE A MORE CAPABLE FOE THAN I SUSPECTED! ALL THE MORE PITY THAT I SHALL BE FORCED TO VANQUISH YOU!
OBSERVE, HELPLESS MORTAL, HOW I CAN MAKE YOU SLOWLY FADE AWAY TO SHEER NOTHINGNESS!
WITHIN A FEW BRIEF SECONDS YOU SHALL BE GONE... FOREVER!
NEVER, DORMAMMU! NOT WHILE THE HOARY HOSTS OF HOGGOTH ARE MINE TO COMMAND!
FOR, THOUGH YOU MOCK THE EARTHLY POWERS I POSSESS, THEY STILL SHALL PROVE EQUAL TO THE TASK OF DEFEATING YOU!

I SEE YOU ARE SURPRISED TO SEE ME SHRUG OFF YOUR FATAL SPELL! WELL, HERE IS YET ANOTHER SURPRISE FOR YOU...!

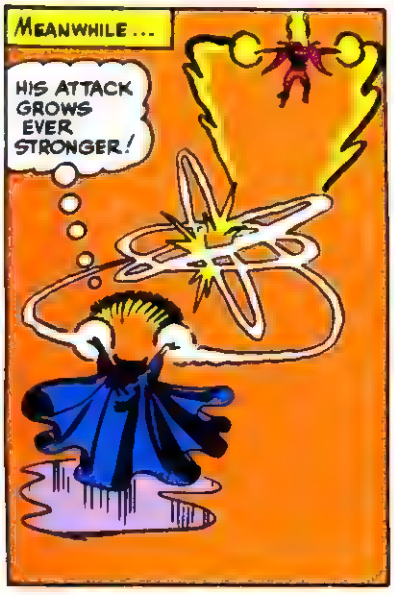

BAH! A MERE CONJURER'S CONE! I DABBLED WITH SUCH PUNY TRICKS WHEN I WAS BUT A CHILD!

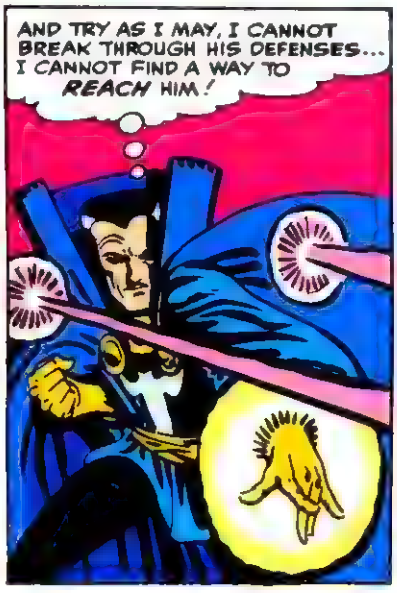

YOU STILL CANNOT EVEN BEGIN TO COMPREHEND THE SCOPE AND EXTENT OF MY ALMOST LIMITLESS POWERS!

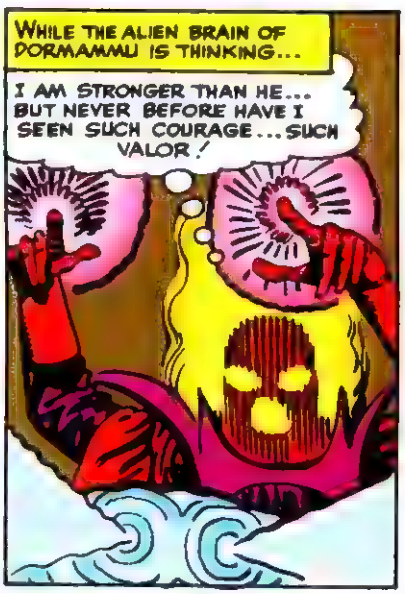
AND SO THE BATTLE RAGES... A BATTLE BETWEEN TWO TOTALLY ALIEN FOES... FOES WITH ONLY ONE THING IS COMMON... AN AWESOME MASTERY OF THE POWERS OF BLACK MAGIC!

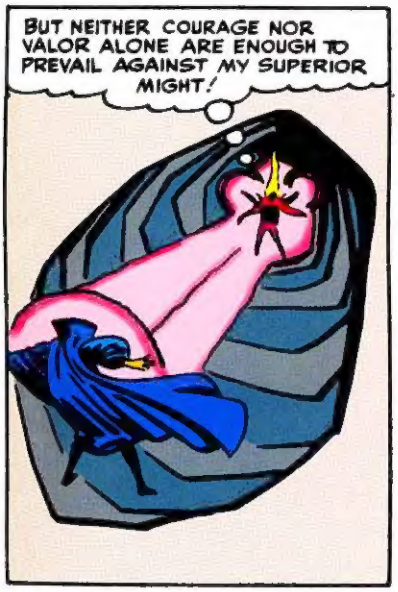

WHILE, IN A SILENT RETREAT IN TIBET, AN AGED MYSTIC OBSERVES EVERY DETAIL OF THE FATEFUL CONFRONTATION... FOR THIS IS... THE ANCIENT ONE!
THERE IS NO TURNING BACK NOW! THE GAME MUST BE PLAYED TO THE END!

MAY THE LIGHT OF THE VISHANTI SHINE UPON DR. STRANGE... AND MAY THE OMNIPOTENT OSHTUR GRANT HIM WISDOM AND STRENGTH!


MEANWHILE...
HIS ATTACK GROWS EVER STRONGER!


AND TRY AS I MAY, I CANNOT BREAK THROUGH HIS DEFENSES... I CANNOT FIND A WAY TO REACH HIM!


WHILE THE ALIEN BRAIN OF DORMAMMU IS THINKING...
I AM STRONGER THAN HE... BUT NEVER BEFORE HAVE I SEEN SUCH COURAGE... SUCH VALOR!


BUT NEITHER COURAGE NOR VALOR ALONE ARE ENOUGH TO PREVAIL AGAINST MY SUPERIOR MIGHT!

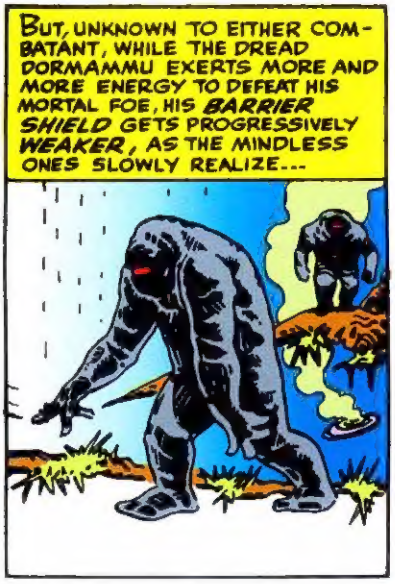
THE ULTIMATE VICTORY MUST BE MINE! THERE CAN BE NO OTHER OUTCOME! IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME!

MEANWHILE, THE HELPLESS GIRL WATCHES, WITH FEARFUL EYES...
IT MATTERS NOT WHO SHALL WIN! IN ANY EVENT I AM DOOMED!

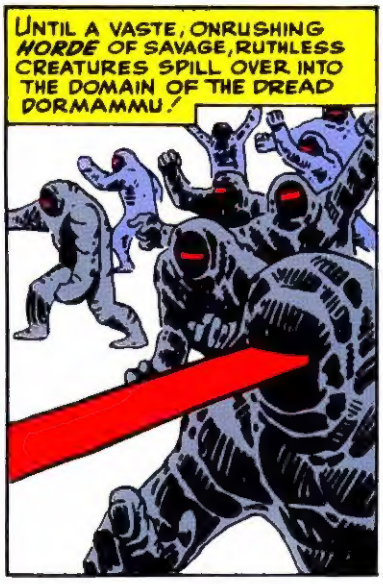
HIS POWER CONTINUES TO INCREASE, WHILE MINE GROWS WEAKER! WHAT MANNER OF BEING IS HE? IS THERE NO WAY TO DRAIN HIS STRENGTH??

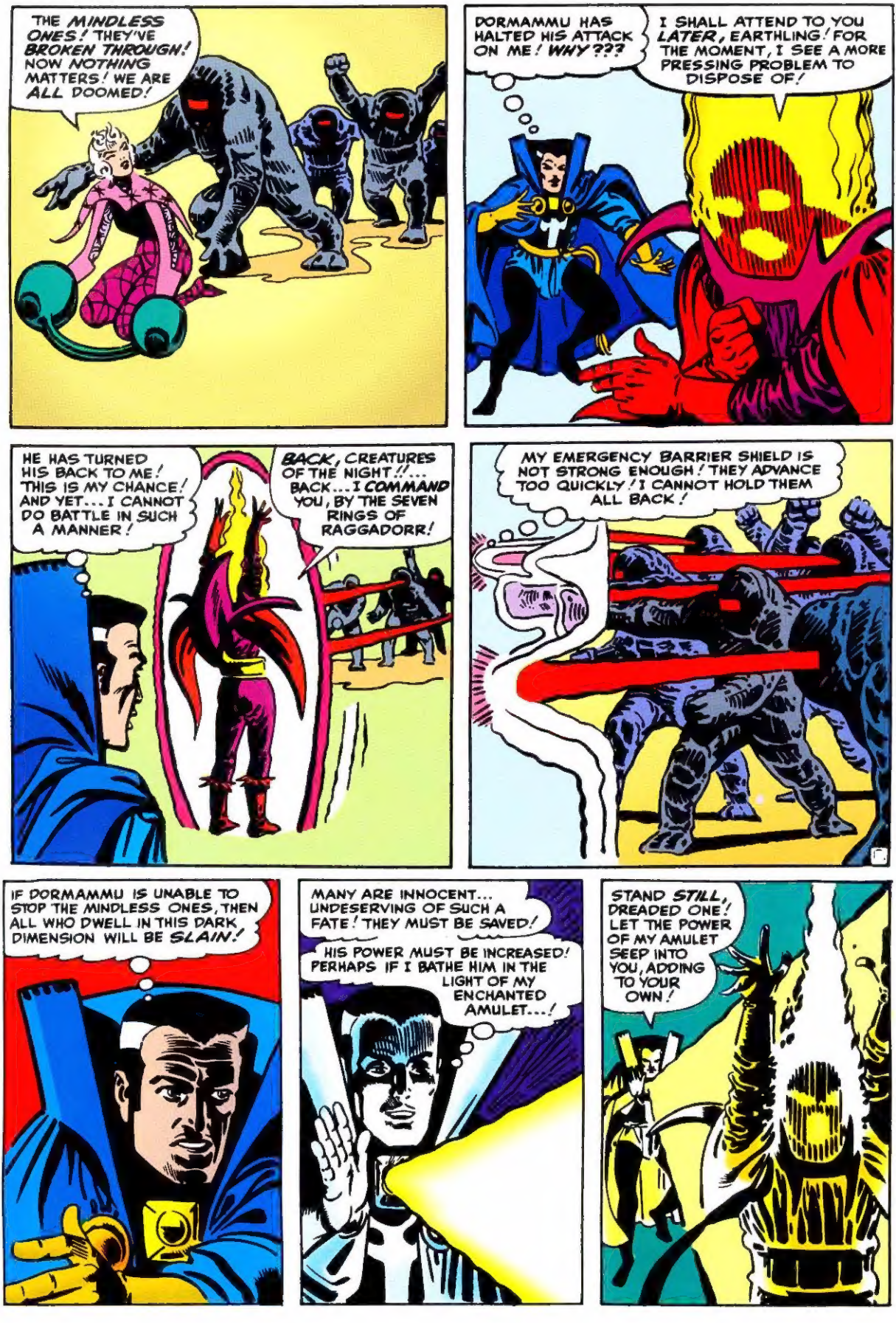
BUT I MUST NOT ALLOW MY MIND TO DWELL ON THOUGHTS OF DEFEAT! I MUST FIGHT ON... UNTIL THE END!

IT WILL SOON BE OVER! THE MORTAL ONE CANNOT HOLD OUT MUCH LONGER!

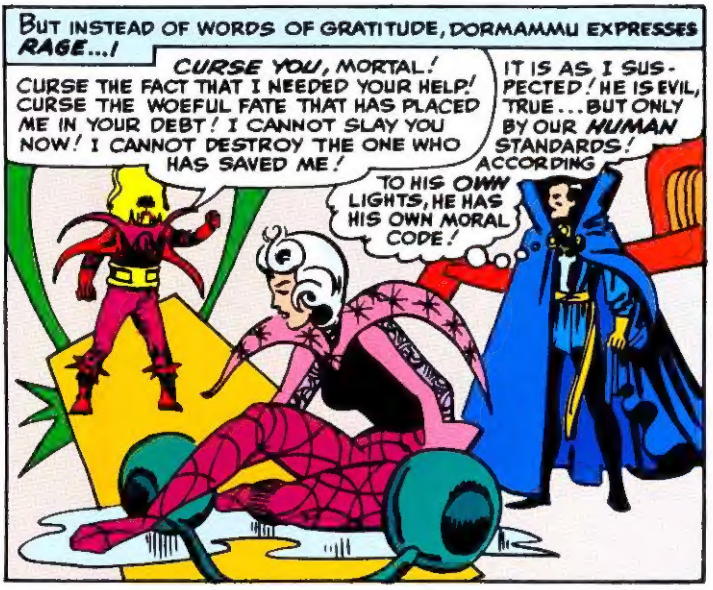

BUT, UNKNOWN TO EITHER COMBATANT, WHILE THE DREAD DORMAMMU EXERTS MORE AND MORE ENERGY TO DEFEAT HIS MORTAL FOE, HIS BARRIER SHIELD GETS PROGRESSIVELY WEAKER, AS THE MINDLESS ONES SLOWLY REALIZE...

SEEING A FEW LEADERS SHUFFLING THROUGH THE BARRIER, OTHERS SOON FOLLOW...


UNTIL A VASTE, ONRUSHING HORDE OF SAVAGE, RUTHLESS CREATURES SPILL OVER INTO THE DOMAIN OF THE DREAD DORMAMMU!


THE MINDLESS ONES! THEY'VE BROKEN THROUGH! NOW NOTHING MATTERS! WE ARE ALL DOOMED!
DORMAMMU HAS HALTED HIS ATTACK ON ME! WHY???
I SHALL ATTEND TO YOU LATER, EARTHLING! FOR THE MOMENT, I SEE A MORE PRESSING PROBLEM TO DISPOSE OF!
HE HAS TURNED HIS BACK TO ME! THIS IS MY CHANCE! AND YET... I CANNOT DO BATTLE IN SUCH A MANNER!
BACK, CREATURES OF THE NIGHT!!... BACK... I COMMAND YOU, BY THE SEVEN RINGS OF RAGGADORR!
MY EMERGENCY BARRIER SHIELD IS NOT STRONG ENOUGH! THEY ADVANCE TOO QUICKLY! I CANNOT HOLD THEM ALL BACK!
IF DORMAMMU IS UNABLE TO STOP THE MINDLESS ONES, THEN ALL WHO DWELL IN THIS DARK DIMENSION WILL BE SLAIN!
MANY ARE INNOCENT... UNDESERVING OF SUCH A FATE! THEY MUST BE SAVED!
HIS POWER MUST BE INCREASED! PERHAPS IF I BATHE HIM IN THE LIGHT OF MY ENCHANTED AMULET...!
STAND STILL, DREADED ONE! LET THE POWER OF MY AMULET SEEP INTO YOU, ADDING TO YOUR OWN!

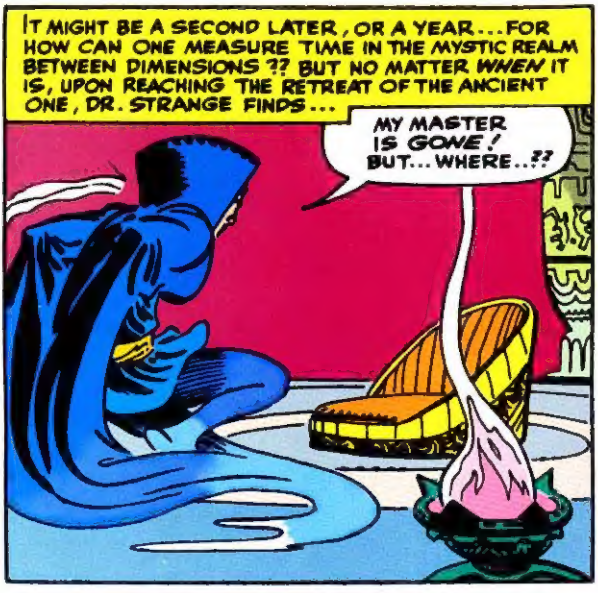
THEN, FORTIFIED BY AWESOME ENERGY FROM DR. STRANGE'S GLEAMING JEWEL, DORMAMMU FINDS HIS STRENGTH INCREASING, UNTIL...
THEY CANNOT PENETRATE ANY FURTHER! IT HOLDS! MY BARRIER HOLDS!

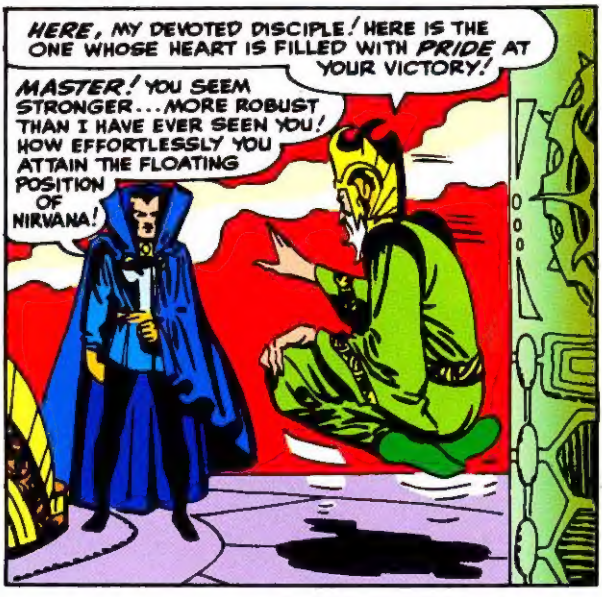

BUT INSTEAD OF WORDS OF GRATITUDE, DORMAMMU EXPRESSES RAGE...!
CURSE YOU, MORTAL! CURSE THE FACT THAT I NEEDED YOUR HELP! CURSE THE WOEFUL FATE THAT HAS PLACED ME IN YOUR DEBT! I CANNOT SLAY YOU NOW! I CANNOT DESTROY THE ONE WHO HAS SAVED ME!
IT IS AS I SUSPECTED! HE IS EVIL, TRUE... BUT ONLY BY OUR HUMAN STANDARDS! ACCORDING TO HIS OWN LIGHTS, HE HAS HIS OWN MORAL CODE!

TRULY, YOU ARE IN MY DEBT, DORMAMMU! BUT I SHALL GO EASY ON YOU! I ASK ONLY TWO PROMISES... AND THEN, THE DEBT SHALL BE PAID! ONE: NO HARM MUST COME TO THIS FEMALE! TWO: YOU MUST VOW NEVER TO INVADE THE EARTH!

SO BE IT! EVEN THOUGH I AM YOUR SUPERIOR, YOU HAVE DONE WHAT NONE COULD DO SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL... YOU HAVE DEFEATED DORMAMMU! BUT, I SHALL NEVER REST UNTIL I HAVE AVENGED THIS INDIGNITY!

WHAT WILL BECOME OF YOU, NOW? PERHAPS THERE COULD BE A WAY TO TAKE YOU BACK WITH ME!?
NO, THIS IS MY WORLD! IT IS HERE THAT I BELONG... NO MATTER WHERE MY HEART SHALL BE!
GO, MAN OF MYSTERY, AND WHATEVER BEFALLS, ALWAYS KNOW... I SHALL NEVER FORGET YOU!


IT MIGHT BE A SECOND LATER, OR A YEAR... FOR HOW CAN ONE MEASURE TIME IN THE MYSTIC REALM BETWEEN DIMENSIONS?? BUT NO MATTER WHEN IT IS, UPON REACHING THE RETREAT OF THE ANCIENT ONE, DR. STRANGE FINDS...
MY MASTER IS GONE! BUT... WHERE...??


HERE, MY DEVOTED DISCIPLE! HERE IS THE ONE WHOSE HEART IS FILLED WITH PRIDE AT YOUR VICTORY!
MASTER! YOU SEEM STRONGER... MORE ROBUST THAN I HAVE EVER SEEN YOU! HOW EFFORTLESSLY YOU ATTAIN THE FLOATING POSITION OF NIRVANA!

THAT IS BECAUSE OF YOUR DEED, MY SON! YOUR TRIUMPH OVER DORMAMMU HAS BROKEN THE SPELL WHICH HE HAD PLACED ON ME, AGES AGO!
AND NOW, IT IS TIME FOR YOU TO RECEIVE YOUR REWARD... SEE WHAT I BESTOW UPON THEE!
FROM THIS MOMENT FORTH, YOU SHALL HAVE A NEW CAPE, AND A MORE WONDROUS AMULET!
YOU SHALL NEED NEW POWERS, FOR YOU WILL BE CALLED UPON TO PERFORM EVEN GREATER DEEDS IN THE FUTURE!
I PRAY THAT I BE FOUND WORTHY, MASTER!
YOU HAVE ALREADY BEEN FOUND WORTHY, LOYAL ONE! FOR IT IS YOU WHO SHALL REPLACE ME WHEN THE TIME COMES FOR ME TO BREATHE THE FINAL VAPORS OF VALTORR! IT IS YOU WHO SHALL ONE DAY BECOME... THE MASTER!
--AND I HAVE--
--WHICH IS THE REASON MY MIND SUDDENLY AWAKENS FROM THIS ENCHANTING MEMORY!
THE SYMBOL OF DEATH DIVERTED MY CONSCIOUSNESS, TO PREVENT MY COMPLETING MY QUEST-- AND I WOULD HAVE WANDERED THIS NETHER-REALM, ENDLESSLY MESMERIZED, HAD I NOT BECOME A SORCERER SUPREME!
YET I HAVE SURVIVED ANOTHER TREACHERY OF THIS MAD ORB--
--AND DELAY ONLY IS RECORDED UPON THE CEASELESS SCROLLS--NOT FAILURE!
I SHALL NOT FAIL!
I SHALL CONFRONT THE UNCONFRONTABLE-- DEATH ITSELF--
--AND I SHALL TRIUMPH!
NEXT MONTH! REALLY! THE STORY THAT TOOK TWO MONTHS TO PRODUCE (AND YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS!)
WHERE BOUNDARIES DECAY!